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AIR POUCH

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Baghdad
8 Aug 51

TO: Department of State

FROM: BAGHDAD 141, August 8, 1951

SUBJ: Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs' Views on Involvement of Mufti in Abdullah's Assassination.

Shahr al-Wakeel, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, told me in an informal conversation this morning that the Iraq Government had sent two Iraqi CID men to Amman to sit in on the Board of Inquiry dealing with the recent assassination of King Abdullah. He said that the evidence pointed to the Mufti and his agents and that preparations were so thorough that two of the assassin's accomplices were discovered to have been standing by with hand grenades for use if the assassin's pistol attempt had failed. He also said that a list of names had been discovered and that the Regent and Nuri Pasha were prominent among those to be disposed of. Extra precautions are in force with regard to Nuri, who departed this morning for the summer resort Sirsank, and these would continue as long as necessary.

Shahr Pasha said that he would ask the British Ambassador to request that special measures be taken for the protection of the Regent while in the United Kingdom.

Shahr Pasha told me that he personally was satisfied that the Mufti was implicated and that he felt the Soviets were moving skillfully behind the scenes to use the Mufti to create disorders in the Arab states. He thought the Mufti hoped to advance his personal fortunes by removing Abdullah from the scene and that in some manner he might create an opportunity to get into the Jordan picture.

Comment: I am not entirely convinced that Shahr Pasha's stated belief that the Soviets were working behind the scene on the Mufti is wholly genuine, and certainly he did not claim that any concrete evidence was brought forward to substantiate it. It is standard practice on the part of most high Iraqi officials with whom I deal to bring the Soviets into the picture on every occasion where it might be plausible, largely, I think, to point up Iraq's needs for military and other assistance.

While the Soviets are of course quite capable of being involved, I am rather inclined to view the Mufti's activities

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-2-

BAGHDAD 141 August 8, 1951

as independently conceived and directed against Zionism and the West, as champions of Zionism in Arab eyes; also against any Arab leaders, such as Abdullah, who wish to try to deal in any form with Israel. In the second degree the Mufti would be against those Arabs who are close to the British or the United States, both of whom are held responsible by all Arabs, high and low, for the creation of Israel.


Edward S. Crocker

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